

# Creative Places Research: Ballybrack and Loughlinstown Community Arts Survey *[February 2024]*



## Executive Summary

### Project Overview

This research survey, conducted by Blue Drum as part of Southside Partnership's Creative Places award (2023-2024), aimed to understand how arts and culture could:

- Inspire community interaction and identity
- Revitalize public spaces in Ballybrack and Loughlinstown

### Survey Methodology

- Survey Type: Online and printed questionnaires
- Total Submissions: 101 (3 online, 98 hard copy)
- Distribution Channels: Community meeting points, local churches, and community facilities

## Key Findings

### Community Arts Participation

- **38.1%** of respondents expressed interest in creating art
- **35.8%** engaged in creative activities in the past 12 months
  - Creative activities included: writing, painting, gardening, singing, photography, filmmaking

### Venue Participation

- Loughlinstown Community Rooms: Most frequented venue (25.7% participation)
- Overall low participation in existing cultural facilities

## Digital Engagement

- **51.2%** did not participate in online arts and culture activities
- Significant generational digital divide:
  - Only **2.3%** of those 65+ participated in online activities

## Community Needs and Perceptions

- **17.4%** identified a need for community art spaces
- **40.9%** believe funding for small community projects would positively impact arts perception

## Community Character

Descriptors ranged from:

- Positive: "close-knit", "inclusive", "family-like"
- Mixed: Nostalgia for past community connections
- Uncertain: Some respondents expressed doubt about current community dynamics

# Recommendations

## Five Strategic Pathways

1. Community Arts Maker Space
  - Repurpose potential spaces (e.g., under closed-up Court arches)
  - Create dedicated creative activity areas
2. Capacity Building
  - Develop community leadership skills
  - Implement arts-based community development approaches
3. Artist Residency
  - Consolidate artist-in-residence program following work with young people, Mens Shed and Women's Shed
  - Focus on children and young people engagement
4. Public Space Activation
  - Launch 1 minute / 3 minute / 5 minute neighbours' initiative
  - Animate public spaces through creative activities
  - Enhance community belonging and identity
5. Ongoing Documentation
  - Continue research and monitoring
  - Track patterns of arts and cultural infrastructure development over time.

# Conclusion

The research reveals a historically vibrant, creative community with a strong desire for more diverse and accessible cultural experiences. Ballybrack and Loughlinstown can foster a more connected and artistically engaged community.

## 1. Methodology & Timeline

Blue Drum designed a survey, to be completed within 5 minutes, in order to gather the opinions of the local residents and community members of Ballybrack and Loughlinstown about their participation in arts and culture, perception of needs and issues, and sense of community as well as further demographic questions, which were not required to be filled in. See Annex 1 for a full list of survey questions. The survey was created as an online questionnaire as well as a printed version for hard copy submissions. A total of 101 survey submissions were received; 3 online surveys and 98 hard copy surveys. The online survey was accessible through a link and hard copies were left at all community meeting points including facilities as well as local churches, The Church of the Apostles in Ballybrack and St Columbanus' Church, Loughlinstown. The survey was called the Spaces and Connections – Loughlinstown and Ballybrack survey, designed by sociologist Indrė Bielevičiūtė and Ed Carroll and focused on arts and culture in the Loughlinstown and Ballybrack area. Its focus was on being creative and producing art and culture yourself and with others. There was an interest in all expressions of creativity both indoors and outdoors from painting to crafting, singing and gardening. Responses were kept *anonymous* and only used to inform the Southside Partnership's research for the Arts Council's Creative Places initiative.

The survey work complemented other avenues of inquiry that sought either to engage with local knowledge and to draw comparison to other places in Dublin. These included

- Creative group mapping workshops with young people, LBS Mens Shed, Womens Shed initiated by artist, Ciara Keegan;
- Design oriented thinking (DOT) analysis in a GIS mapping of community facilities;
- Appreciation visits to other Creative Places Tallaght and Inchicore, Kilmainham and Rialto area.

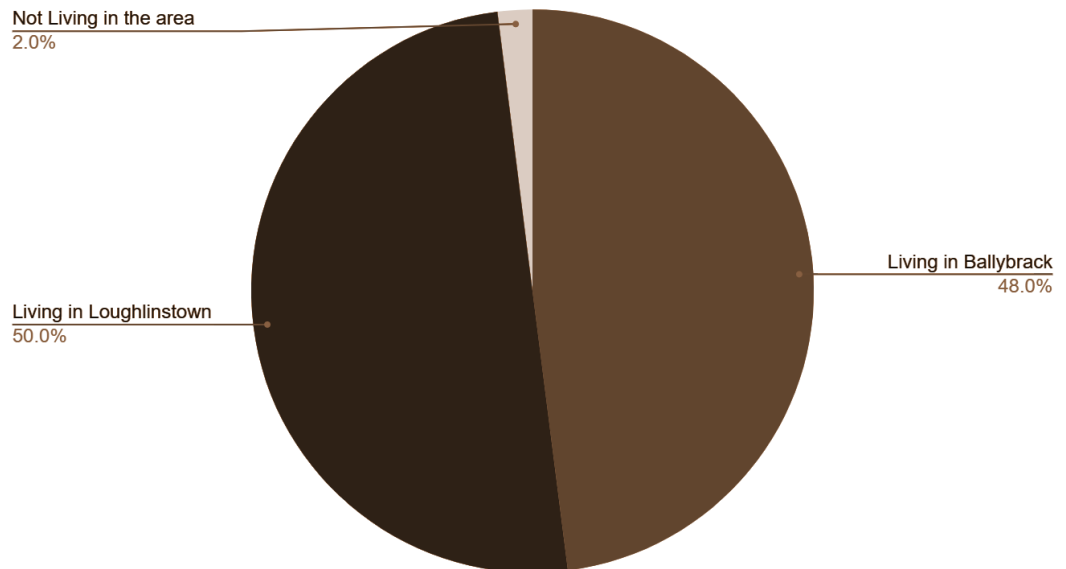
## 2. Results: The Survey

### About the responses

The survey received a balance of views between the two areas with a completion

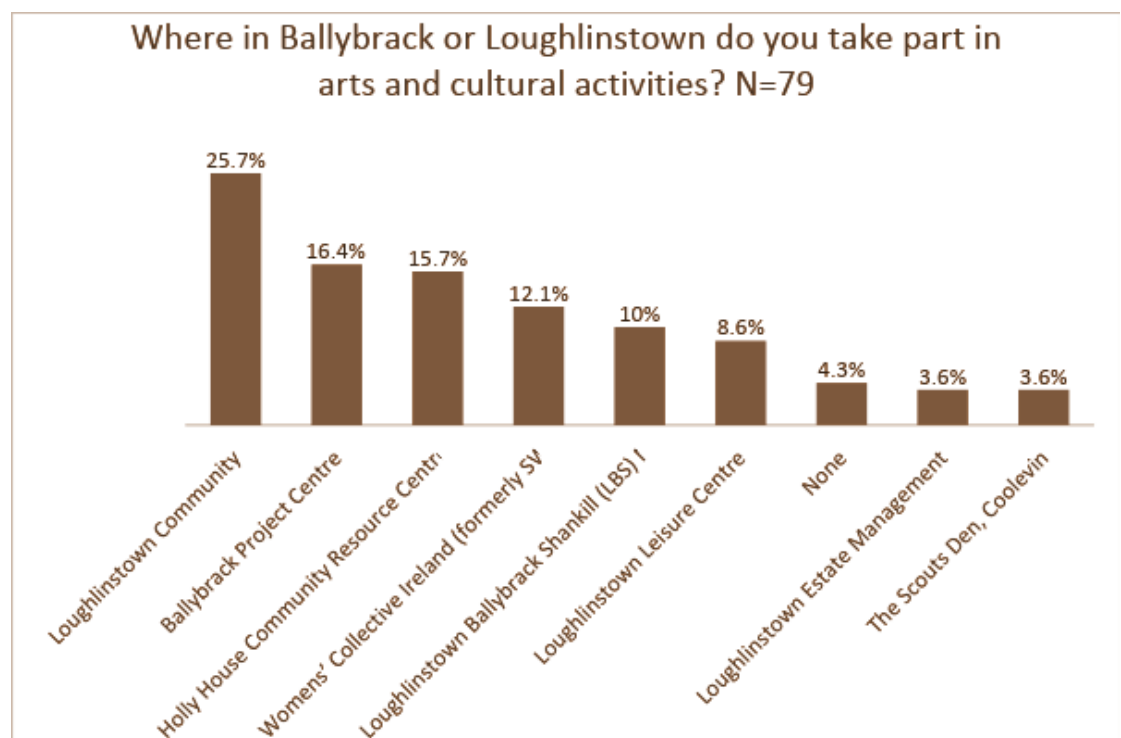
rate of 98%.

### No of responses



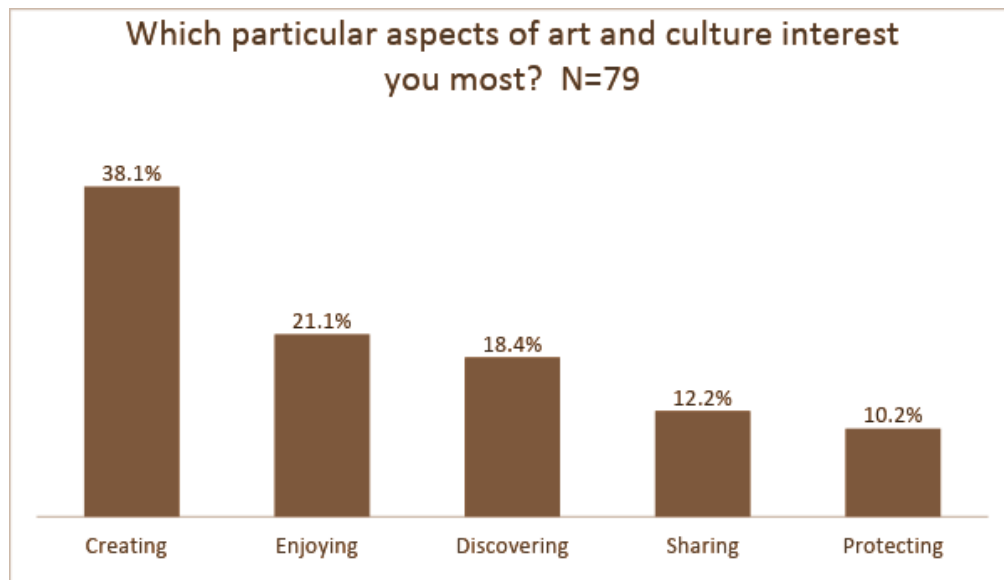
### About arts and culture activities

Arts and Culture Activities in Ballybrack and Loughlinstown: The data shows a strong community preference for increased arts activities, particularly for children and the elderly. It also highlights a lack of facilities dedicated to arts and culture in these areas.



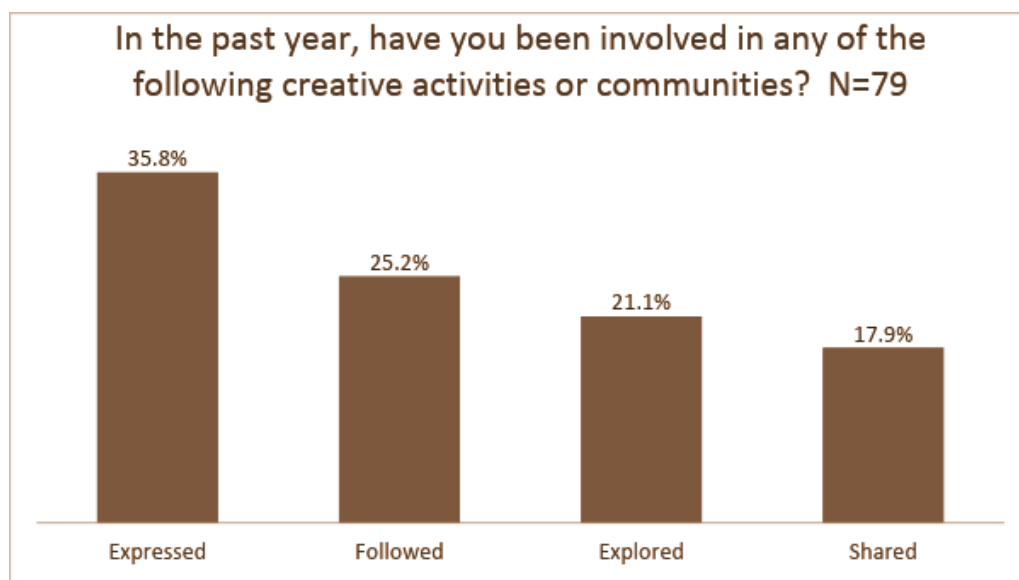
## About the venues for art and culture

Popular Venues for Arts and Culture: Loughlinstown Community Place is the most frequented venue for arts and culture activities, with 25.7% of respondents participating in events there. This indicates its significance in the community's cultural engagement.



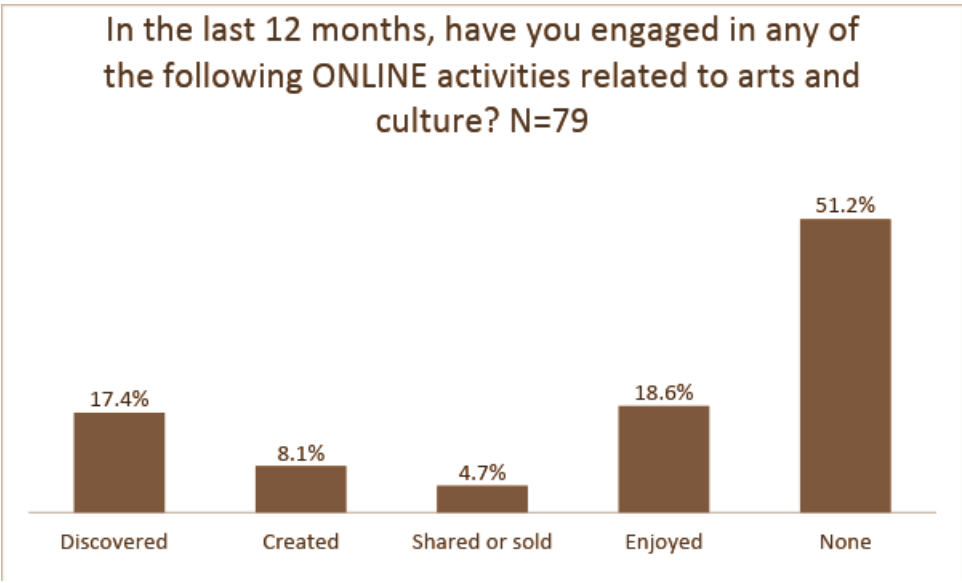
2.

Interest in Creating Art: A notable 38.1% of respondents express a keen interest in creating art. This underlines the community's active participation in artistic creation rather than just consumption.



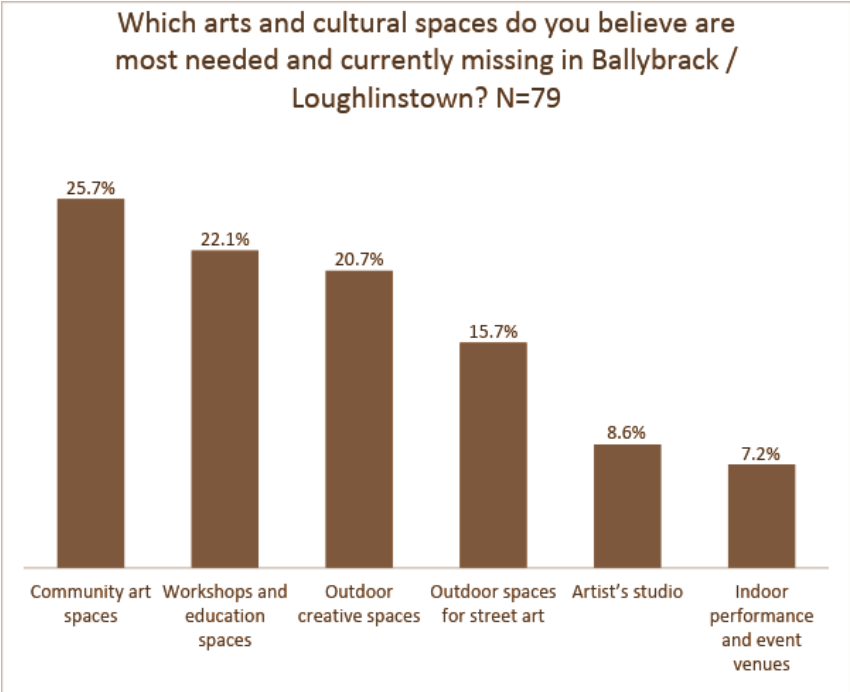
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Creative Activities Engagement: Reflecting the interest in art creation, 35.8% of people have engaged in creative activities like writing, painting, gardening, singing, photography, or short filmmaking in the last 12 months. This suggests a diverse range of creative pursuits among the community.



4.

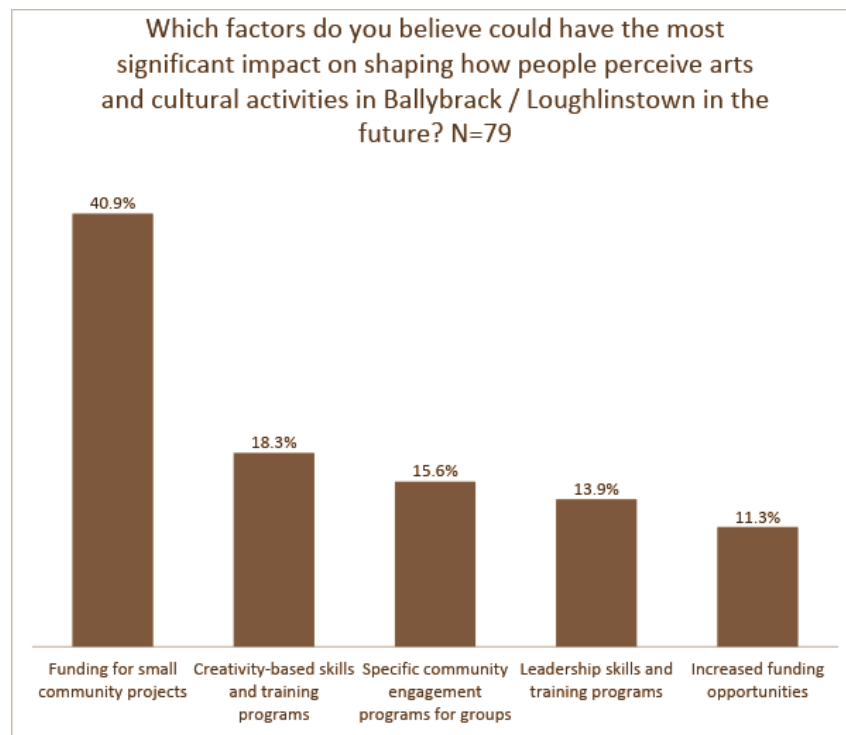
Online Arts and Culture Activities: Over half of the respondents (51.2%) did not participate in any online arts and culture activities. This trend is particularly pronounced among older demographics. Specifically, engagement in these online activities is predominantly observed in individuals under 65 years of age, with only 2.3% of those aged 65 and above participating in such activities. This data highlights a notable generational divide in the adoption of digital platforms for cultural engagement.



5.

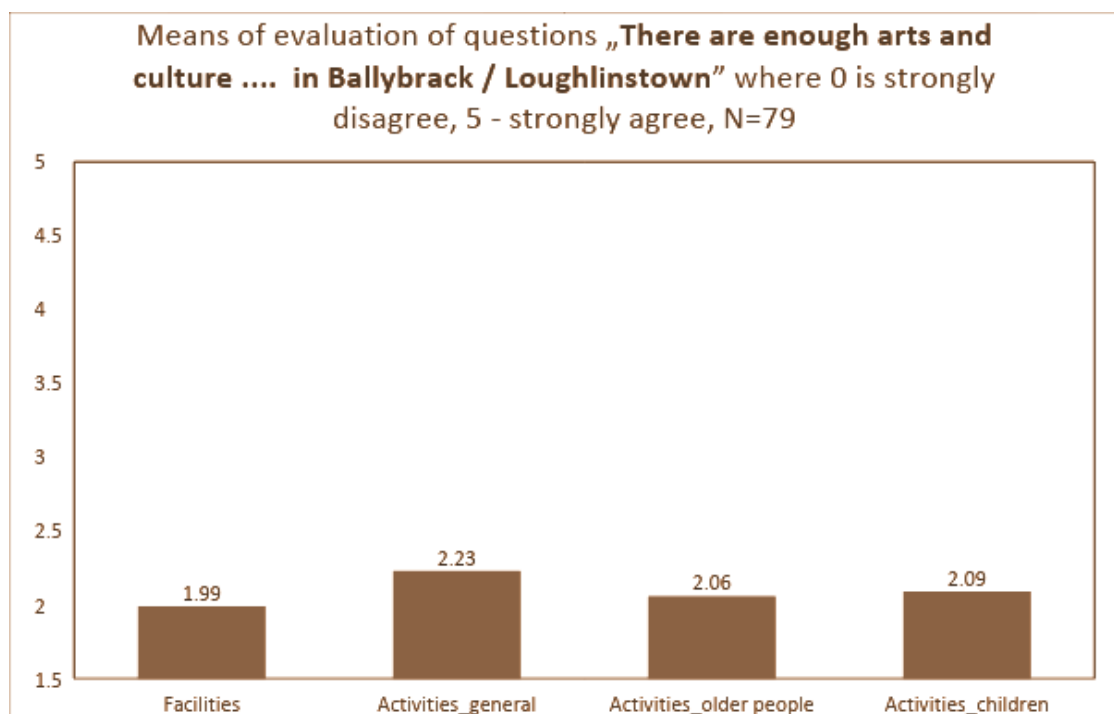
Community Art Spaces: The greatest perceived need, according to 17.4% of respondents, is for community art spaces. This points to a desire for more accessible and communal areas dedicated to arts.

6.



Impact of Funding on Arts Perception: 40.9% of respondents believe that funding for small community projects would significantly influence how people perceive arts and culture in Ballybrack and Loughlinstown.

7.



There was strong consensus across the respondents that identified poor level of arts and culture activities in Ballybrack and Loughlinstown in facilities providing offers (1.99%), and in terms of general activities (2.23%), activities for older people (2.06%) and activities for children (2.09%).

### 3. Survey: Main takeaways:

1. **Need for More Cultural Facilities and Activities:** There is a clear demand for more diverse and accessible cultural facilities, especially tailored to children and older people. This reflects a community desire for inclusive cultural engagement.
2. **More community culture and development work to enhance 'belonging':** The community of Ballybrack and Loughlinstown is perceived as close-knit and inclusive, with descriptors like "family-like," "inclusive," and "community - together" commonly used by survey respondents. However, some members express a sense of change, reminiscing about a stronger community in the past, while others show uncertainty with terms like "don't know" or "no idea." Despite these mixed sentiments, there's a notable portion of the population that feels deeply engaged and connected to the community. Leveraging this sense of belonging in cultural programming can effectively strengthen community bonds. Close-knit, community and together" commonly used by survey respondents. However, some members express a sense of change, reminiscing about a stronger community in the past, while others show uncertainty with terms like "don't know" or "no idea." Despite these mixed sentiments, there's a notable portion of the population that feels deeply engaged and connected to the community. Leveraging this sense of belonging in cultural programming can effectively strengthen community bonds.
3. **Low levels of participation in community actions:** The survey suggests that at present, there is a relatively low level of participation in online community events in Ballybrack and Loughlinstown. Recognizing this, it becomes crucial not only to create more digital events but also to focus on improving their presentation and making them more accessible and engaging for those not accustomed to digital platforms.
4. **Targeted Programs for Specific Groups:** Recognizing the unique needs of different demographic groups (youth, parents, the elderly) is vital. Tailored programs can ensure inclusivity and wider participation.
5. **Public spaces renewal:** Public space holds a unique and critical role in community life, serving as central hubs where residents of Ballybrack and Loughlinstown can gather, interact, and engage with each other. These spaces are more than just physical locations; they are essential for fostering a sense of belonging and community identity. By utilizing public spaces for cultural activities, the community can transform these areas into centers of social and cultural interaction.

### 4. Conclusion and recommendations

The research reveals a vibrant, creative community with a strong desire for more diverse and accessible cultural experiences. Ballybrack and Loughlinstown have significant potential to foster a more connected and artistically engaged community through targeted, strategic interventions. The survey findings are integrated into the



recently concluded Loughlinstown and Ballybrack Creative Places research. Five pathways could be pursued through short-term activity (2024-2025) and eventually help articulate longer-term objectives.

1. Identify a community arts maker space to support project work  
**Next step:** Continue work with DLR Community section to repurpose, possibly under one of the closed-up Court arches, as a dedicated maker space for creative activities.  
**Evidence:** Community art survey and research clearly identified the need for a space that works for creative activities. Tactically, there is also a potential for performance, circus, dance, etc activities in larger sports facilities.
2. Tailor opportunities for capacity building of community and key workers.  
**Next step:** Arts based community development approaches can incorporate small project work and learning by doing. Key is the transfer of new leadership, creative and cooperation capabilities.  
**Evidence:** Research findings about the needs for practical community art and leadership skills .
3. A new phase for the Creative Places artist in residence  
**Next step:** Consolidate the residency in cooperation with the DLR Arts Office.  
**Evidence:** There is evidence from the research findings and from the wider context of the priority of children and young people.
4. Prioritise increasing community mobilisation to animate public space activities to enhance sense of belonging.  
**Next step:** dlr's current "10-minute neighborhood" concept used in the Development Plan requires supplementary "1-minute" and "3-minute" neighborhood perspectives—immediate, micro-local frameworks that cultivate community bonding using public spaces. [See diagram Annex 2]. Such a citizen-up framework activates creative neighbours' initiative where residents take the initiative to animate public space e.g. street fest, climate action, community energy, underpass, Linear/Kilbogget Parks.  
**Evidence:** Research findings identify the potential of public space for the resilience of the community. Art and culture makes for a more active people and it is a way to increase the voice and identity of the community and estates in terms of better health and public space.
5. Continue to document arts and cultural work and infrastructure.  
**Next step:** Continue a research strand e.g. '[Loughlinstown and Ballybrack Community Centres and Facilities](#)'  
**Evidence:** Research findings identify a base line that could continue to be monitored and enhanced.

## **Annex 1 - Survey Form. Community, art and culture survey of Ballybrack & Loughlinstown**

Thank you for participating in our survey on arts and culture in the area. We are interested in all expressions of creativity both indoors and outdoors from painting to crafting, singing and gardening. *Everything!* Your responses will be kept *anonymous* and will only be used to inform the Southside Partnership's research for the Arts Council's Creative Places initiative. No personally identifiable information will be collected. Blue Drum, a registered charity and community arts organisation. Our survey can take 3 -4 minutes.

1. Have you lived in Loughlinstown or Ballybrack in the past 5 years?

Yes, I currently live in Loughlinstown or lived there within the last 5 years. ☐

Yes, I currently live in Ballybrack or lived there within the last 5 years. ☐

No, I have not lived in Loughlinstown or Ballybrack within the last 5 years. ☐

2. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

There are enough facilities for art and culture in Ballybrack / Loughlinstown.

Strongly Disagree ☐

Disagree ☐

Neutral ☐

Agree ☐

Strongly Agree ☐

Ballybrack / Loughlinstown offers a wide variety of arts and cultural activities.

Strongly Disagree ☐

Disagree ☐

Neutral ☐

Agree ☐

Strongly Agree ☐

Ballybrack / Loughlinstown have enough arts and culture activities for older people.

Strongly Disagree ☐

Disagree ☐

Neutral ☐

Agree ☐

Strongly Agree ☐

Ballybrack / Loughlinstown has enough arts and culture activities for children.

Strongly Disagree ☐

Disagree ☐

Neutral ☐

Agree ☐

Strongly Agree ☐

3. Where in Ballybrack/Loughlinstown do you take part in arts and cultural activities?

Ballybrack Project Centre ☐

Loughlinstown Estate Management ☐

Holly House Community Resource Centre ☐  
LBS Mens Shed ☐  
Womens' Collective Ireland (formerly SWAN) ☐

Loughlinstown Community Rooms ☐  
The Scouts Den, Coolevin ☐  
Loughlinstown Leisure Centre ☐

I do not take part in arts and culture activities in the areas ☐

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Which particular aspects of art and culture interest you most? (Select up to 3)

Discovering local history, heritage, identity, and a sense of belonging ☐

Creating art, such as painting, crafting, cooking, gardening, reading, writing, etc. ☐

Sharing your own creations, such as photos, films, poems, exhibitions, songs ☐

Enjoying arts and culture through events, performances, concerts, and music ☐

Protecting local heritage, customs, activities, expressions ☐

None of the above ☐

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Do you consider yourself an artist?

Yes, I'm a professional artist. ☐

Yes, I'm a non-professional artist. ☐

No, I do not consider myself an artist. ☐

6. In the past year, have you been involved in any of the following creative activities or communities? Please check all that apply:

-Explored local history, identity, or sense of belonging (For example: I visited historical sites, attended cultural events, or participated in discussions about local heritage.) ☐

-Expressed creativity through writing, painting, gardening, singing, photo or filmmaking. ☐

-Shared your creative work with others or engaged with creative communities online or in your community (For example: Shared own art online, took part in a choir, or book club.) ☐

-Followed or interacted with creative groups to enhance your skills (For example: Attended writing workshops, participated in online classes, or followed cooking tutorials.) ☐

-None of these ☐

-Other: \_\_\_\_\_

7. In the last 12 months, have you engaged in any of the following ONLINE activities related to arts and culture? Please select all that apply:

-Discovered online artists, creatives, arts, or creative groups as well as local cultural heritage. ☐

-Created art or other creative content online (such as digital art, music or online crafts tutorials). ☐

-Shared or sold your own creative work online, such as art or homemade items. ☐

-Enjoyed online platforms to participate in art and cultural activities (such as virtual concerts, live-streamed events, online exhibitions, or digital artifacts). ☐

-None of the above ☐

-Other: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Which arts and cultural spaces do you believe are most needed and currently missing in Ballybrack / Loughlinstown? Please select up to three options:

- Indoor performance and event venues ☐
- Artist's studio ☐
- Workshops and education spaces (e.g. for sewing, embroidery, etc.) ☐
- Community art spaces (e.g. for rehearsal, dance, choir, etc.) ☐
- Outdoor creative spaces (e.g. for gardening, landscaping, etc.) ☐
- Outdoor spaces for street art ☐
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

9. Looking ahead, which factors do you believe could have the most significant impact on shaping how people perceive arts and cultural activities in Ballybrack/Loughlinstown in the future? Please select the two options you consider most important

- Funding for small community projects ☐
- Leadership skills and training programs in arts and culture for the community ☐
- Creativity-based skills and training programs in arts and culture for the community ☐
- Specific community engagement programs for groups (e.g., people with a disability, etc) ☐
- Increased funding opportunities ☐
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Please describe the Ballybrack or Loughlinstown community in one word or phrase. \_\_\_\_\_

11. What is your age?

18-35 ☐

36-64 ☐

65+ ☐

12. Do you identify as:

Male ☐

Female ☐

Non-binary ☐

Self identify:

## Annex 2 - Creating Community Value through Public Space Action

